

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An optical pickup in an optical disk reproducing device is operable to switch operations between a low-power operation mode and a high-power operation mode, and includes a liquid crystal element and a polarization beam splitter, which together attenuate, only in the low-power operation mode, a laser beam emitted by a laser diode onto an optical disk. The liquid crystal element is turned ON only in the low-power operation mode to serve as a polarization rotating element. Working with the polarization beam splitter, the polarization rotating element attenuates a polarized component of the incident light on the optical disk.